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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0410  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0469  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2011  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0815  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0487  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0531  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0920

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000156

SIPDIS

SECSTATE FOR AF-BOULWARE; AF/W-HEFLIN/DENNISON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: MAURITANIA: POLITICAL ROUNDUP FOR THE WEEK OF  
FEBRUARY 15-19

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 137

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 140

[1](#)C. NOUAKCHOTT 143

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Cornelius C. Walsh for reasons 1.  
4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: For the week of February 15-19, a Libyan delegation visited Mauritania, with little tangible results. The junta sent a letter to the AU proposing a way out of the crisis, a move widely regarded as a bid to avoid further EU condemnation. A proxy of Colonel Vall put forth a new initiative out of the crisis, while the FNDD was authorized to hold a rally for the first time in many months. President Abdallahi's son was detained and transferred from Lemden to Nouakchott to appear before the Senate for a corruption investigation. Anxiety over targeted sanctions continued within regime circles and President Abdahllahi and FNDD reached out to Francophonie ferbruaru 20 meeting with a letter offering serious concessions to resolve the crisis, including and "honroable" exit for the perpetrators of the coup. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Libyan delegation visit: A Libyan delegation made a surprise visit to Mauritania February 11-14 to try to find a solution to the crisis (Ref A). However, no official announcement was made regarding the outcome of the delegation's visit, beyond vague statements from various political actors that they were willing to talk.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Junta letter to AU: In a letter dated February 12 and made public February 17, junta "Foreign Minister" Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou put forth a proposal from the High State Council to resolve the crisis (Ref B). Vague in many crucial areas (particularly with respect to General Aziz), it was widely regarded as a last ditch attempt by the junta to sway European opinion in its favor ahead of the February 20 EU consultative meeting in Paris (Ref C).

[1](#)4. (C) Colonel Vall comes out of the shadows: Yet another in a long line of initiatives to solve the crisis was announced, this time by Mahfoudh Ould Bettah February 18. This initiative, however, was noteworthy because Bettah, Minister of Justice during the democratic transition period of 2005-2007, is regarded as Vall's strongman. LES state that any statement from Bettah can be interpreted as coming

from Vall himself. The initiative called for the HCE (specifically singling out General Aziz by name), the FNDD, and the RFD to come to the table and negotiate. Comment: Vall, who has kept his intentions so far a closely guarded secret, may finally be emerging into the limelight. The imposition of AU sanctions and perceived increasing weakness of Aziz may be encouraging Vall to test the waters. End comment.

15. (SBU) FNDD rally authorized: For the first time in several months, the anti-coup FNDD was authorized by the regional governor of Nouakchott to hold a rally, which took place February 19 at Capital Stadium in Nouakchott. The FNDD was not, however, authorized to march outside the stadium. Comment: The rally's authorization fits into the junta's previous patterns of allowing opposition gatherings, albeit under strict control, just before a major international deadline regarding the situation in Mauritania. Attendance estimates vary between 1,500 (reasonable) and (4,000) (a bit high). At rally, FNDD leader Maloud unveiled Abdahllahi letter to January 20 OIF meeting and underscored that President was willing make concessions outlined, while Junta refused to budge. End comment.

16. (C) President Abdallahi's son detained: Local press reports state and LES have confirmed that Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, President Abdallahi's son, was detained by the Gendarmerie February 19 in his native village of Lemden and taken to Nouakchott. Abdallahi is scheduled to appear before a Parliamentary investigative committee looking into supposed corruption charges against President Abdallahi's wife,

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Khattou Mint Boukhary. Comment: Conspiracy theories abound that Abdallahi's forced transfer to Nouakchott the same day of a planned FNDD rally is a move by the High State Council to sow confusion among the FNDD's ranks. Abdahllahi fils was released from the Senate in the evening and did not make the rally. End comment.

17. (C) Daddah requests meeting: PolOff met at the request of Ahmed Ould Daddah at RFD party headquarters February 19. Report follows.

18. (C) Maouloud requests meeting: Charge met at the request of FNDD co-leader Mohamed Ould Maouloud February 19. report follows septel.

19. (U) Lowest moment of the week: In wake of Libyan delegation visit, Al Jazeera was prepared to carry one hour special on Mauritanian crisis with appearances by all major players, FNDD, pro and anti regime parliamentarians, Junta MinInfo, Ould Dahdah and RFD as well as indepoendents. However, program was scrubbed when RFD/Ould Dadhdah refused to appear because they had not been granted same courtesies of invitation as other participants, i.e., FNDD and Abdahllahi camp.

HANKINS